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TAGS: [KPAO](#) [KMDR](#) [PREL](#) [KIPR](#) [ETRD](#) [OVIP](#) [CH](#)
SUBJECT: Ambassador and Commerce Secretary Receive Massive Press Coverage

Ref: A) Guangzhou 611, B) Guangzhou 616, C) Guangzhou 619, D)
Guangzhou 622

Summary

1. (SBU) Summary and Comment: Over a billion people are believed to have read, watched or listened to Chinese and international media reports covering the Ambassador and Commerce Secretary's October 26-27 trip to Guangzhou. While south China press -- government owned and operated -- is accurately regarded as less restrictive than elsewhere, the provincial government fought Post's efforts to maximize press coverage. But after difficult negotiations throughout the process, in the end local officials could not ignore the need to provide media access for high-profile visits. End summary and comment.

Over One Billion Served

2. (SBU) The statistics are gaudy -- over 100 journalists produced over 220 reports that covered the Ambassador and Commerce Secretary's two-day visit and reached an estimated Chinese audience of over 750 million and international audience of 300 million. Overall coverage was positive, focusing on both soft issues -- the Ambassador speaking Cantonese and Mandarin, his gentleness with handicapped children, the Commerce Secretary's return "home" -- to the sensitive: the Commerce Secretary's direct criticism of the PRC for inadequate enforcement of IPR. (For a complete analysis of press coverage, please see:
<http://china.state.gov/GZ/PAS/Weekly%20Highlights/2009>

Guangzhou: The Hard Slog on Media

3. (SBU) A day before the Ambassador's arrival, it looked likely that the Guangdong Intellectual Property Office -- the local host for the IPR Forum to be attended by both the Secretary and Ambassador -- would deny access to all Chinese reporters that they had not invited as well as all international media, including CNN, Newsweek, Reuters, AFP and AP. Post requested intervention from the Guangdong Foreign Affairs Office, but they remained agnostic, saying that the decision to grant access rested with the local host and that they were powerless to assist. Fighting to ensure that all reporters -- Chinese and international -- were granted access was acrimonious.

By Any Means Necessary

4. (SBU) Copies of the Secretary's public remarks were shared with Post in advance, and Post released their translation as the Secretary delivered the actual remarks. The rush to publish most likely helped some of the more critical content evade censorship. South China's business magazine powerhouse, the 21st Century Business Herald, even printed the remarks in their entirety.

Don't Discount New Media

15. (SBU) Websites developed specifically for mobile-phone users receive increasingly heavy traffic in China. 3g.cn alone, for example, attracts over 100 million visitors a day, the majority of whom are young, white-collar, and wealthy enough to own a smart phone. Post's efforts to recruit Kong.net, 3g.cn, as well as regional media who focus on their mobile-phone website platforms resulted in at least 200 million additional readers.

Conclusion

16. (SBU) Comment: Visitors from Washington and Beijing can expect press coverage during visits to south China. Post is hopeful that the sloggng it takes to secure press access will diminish as the number of visitors, and the provincial government's familiarity with high level U.S. visitors, increases. Comment.
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